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Unconscious Adaptation: *Hard Candy* as *Little Red Riding Hood*

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Abstract Critics and reviewers were quick to articulate the visual comparison of David Slade's red-hooded heroine, Hayley, in his contemporary psychological thriller *Hard Candy* (2005), with the folkloric heroine, Little Red Riding Hood, but so far scholars have neglected to look beyond the connection of the red hood to consider the thematic and narratological similarities that can be found in comparison with the folk tales. The choice of costume, described by the film's screenwriter, Brian Nelson, 'as a piece of accidental poetry' suggests that fairy tales occupy a complex space within adaptation studies. This article therefore seeks to establish the concept of unconscious adaptation and appropriation within the discipline as a way of promoting fairy tales as the ultimate intertexts.

Keywords *Unconscious adaptation,* Little Red Riding Hood*,* Hard Candy*, feminism, Jungian psychoanalysis.*

Little Red Riding Hood is one of the most adapted fairy tales of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries;[1] yet, the use of fairy tales and folklore is often overlooked in adaptation studies; allusions and intertextual references are acknowledged, but rarely interrogated. This may simply be because they are difficult to discuss within traditional adaptation debates; there is no concern in the public or academic domain whether an adaptation of *Little Red Riding Hood* remains faithful to its source, or if the 'essence' of the literary work is captured. Like no other genre the fairy tale 'belongs' not to a particular author or in any one version but to the Western cultural collective,[2] in a way that promotes a continuum of adaptation that Julie Sanders associates with classical myth: 'A culture's mythology is its body of traditional narratives. Mythical literature depends upon, incites even, perpetual acts of reinterpretation in new contexts, a process that embodies the very idea of appropriation' (Sanders 63). I would argue that fairy tales are more prolific and widely known than classical myths, but there are perhaps only a handful that have survived to acquire this status, such as *Cinderella*, *Sleeping Beauty*, *Jack and the Beanstalk*, and *Little Red Riding Hood*, and these stories are regularly appropriated and adapted for a diverse range of cultural products.

As many adaptation theorists readily admit,[3] a lot of time and effort has been spent in creating a taxonomy for the discipline, even though such work often concludes with the realization that all classifications are fluid, and that adaptations are rarely just one kind of adaptation, but many. This article will not add to the overwhelming array of

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adaptation terminology but what does need to be recognized and defined is the category of unconscious appropriation that is particularly resonant when discussing fairy tale adaptations: 'Genette's statement that literature like any other activity of the mind, is based on conventions of which, with some exceptions, it is not aware' (Allen 97) hints at the unconscious nature of textual production, but so far this approach has not featured in adaptation studies, even though it is acknowledged in folkloristics:

> The language and motifs of the tales are internalised within the culture, rendering fairy tales sophisticated communications devices that influence consumer trends, lifestyle choices and gender models. One effect of fairy tales' adoption by visual media is that their significance is underestimated; they are rendered invisible by their very ubiquity (Bonner 2).

To demonstrate the way *Little Red Riding Hood* has become a part of the un/conscious cultural collective, I will examine director David Slade's film *Hard Candy*, released in 2005, as an unconscious appropriation and revision of the tale.

Little Red Riding Hood has long been accepted as a parable of rape where Red is blamed for her own victimization. The reading of Red as a 'willing victim' began with the most dominant literary versions of the tale today, *Le Petit Chaperon Rouge* by Charles Perrault (1697) and the Grimm's *Rotkäppchen* (1812). Their literary accomplishments in preserving the story entrenched it in didacticism about female propriety, simultaneously rejecting and burying the triumphant heroine of the oral versions that resulted in *The Grandmother's Tale*.[4] Since the 1970s at least, the tale has been appropriated and retold by many feminist writers, such as Angela Carter,[5] attempting to liberate the story from patriarchal acculturating messages that negate the importance of the female quest. Bruno Bettelheim also published his most famous work, *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales* in 1976, bringing to public attention the psychological value of reading fairy tales.[6] Feminism and psychoanalysis have since shaped the way we culturally understand fairy tales, and for this reason I intend to use a feminist-Jungian frame through which to analyse *Hard Candy* and its relationship to the three folk versions. This allows for an approach that can interrogate the mythological nature of fairy tales while considering their ideological implications. First, I will examine the construction of Slade's heroine in terms of the Red Riding Hood archetype and the fairy tale quest narrative in relation to the Jungian shadow, a destructive and malignant force that threatens psychological integrity. Second, I will consider how the ideological contexts of the tales have been adapted for a twenty-first-century setting, in relation to rape and paedophilia as manifestations of the collective shadow.

As a stylish, postmodern film, Slade's appropriation of the tale resists a clear genre definition. It can be seen as a detective story in the way Hayley searches Jeff's apartment for evidence of paedophilic activity, a rape-revenge movie in Hayley's role as vigilante, a psychological thriller where the tension between Hayley and her captive mounts, and as a slasher/horror in its suggested depiction of mutilation and castration. This multiplicity is not felt initially because at the outset the audience is made to believe they are familiar with the typical horror situation being represented, where a young girl falls foul of an older man. The opening scenes focus on the first meeting between Hayley and Jeff, who have only previously had communication through Internet chat rooms. The obvious age and physical difference immediately alerts us to the modern

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dangers of Internet grooming. The two meet in a coffee shop before going to Jeff's home, where we discover that the unseen and murdered teenager Donna Mauer is Jeff's victim, and Hayley is the avenger who has in fact been 'grooming' Jeff in cyberspace. The predator-and-prey dynamic of Jeff and Hayley is inherent to *Little Red Riding Hood* and the horror film, and there are many retellings that reverse the roles of Red and the wolf.[7] In this way, Slade's film can be seen as an appropriation that ultimately belongs to the canon of stories that depict Red as monstrous.

As a means of highlighting the contradictory nature of how theorists (including myself) think about adaptation and appropriation, it is worth quoting Sanders, who suggests that there is a difference between methods, where the latter is less celebratory in its connection with a source: 'In appropriations the intertextual relationships may be less explicit, more embedded, but what is often inescapable, is the fact that a political or ethical commitment shapes a writer's, director's, or performer's decision to reinterpret a source text' (Sanders 2). *Hard Candy* can be seen as an embedded appropriation in Sander's terms, as the film does not explicitly acknowledge its relationship to the folk tale, and it is 'deliberately politically charged'. However, this is not in its conscious reshaping of *Little Red Riding Hood*. As screenwriter Brian Nelson explains, it was, 'a piece of accidental poetry that she's in this red hood because it was part of the clothing choices that were available that day—there was no sort of Red Riding Hood imagery in our minds, and yet, at the same time that's become one of the signature pieces of the visual story'.[8] Reviewers were quick to articulate this visual comparison, but, so far, scholars (and reviewers) have neglected to look beyond the connection of the red hood to consider the thematic and narratological similarities that can be found in comparison with the folk tales. The red cape is of course a focal point and, as Zipes explains, was used by Perrault to convey a very specific message: 'She is topped with a *red* hat, a chaperon, making her into a type of bourgeois girl tainted with sin, since red, like the scarlet letter A, recalls the devil and heresy' (Zipes 348). Before Perrault there was no red hood, and its invention undoubtedly makes us suspicious of Red's character, as does the Grimms' emphasis on the symbolic straying from the path. Zipes goes on to discuss how, in the contemporary imagination, the character of Red has become split, so that in products aimed at adults she is often sexually aware and 'desirous of some kind of sexual assignation with the wolf' (Zipes 7). This makes her a kind of *femme-fatale* figure whose dangerous sexual knowledge can disrupt social order, whereas products made for children typically portray a doll-like little girl who needs patriarchal protection, seen in the Grimms' introduction of the rescuing huntsman. This archetypal split can be seen in the literary tale(s), as the projection of an innocent girl at the beginning—aligning Red as the 'good' heroine—is replaced by the end of the story with the protagonist 'guilty' of succumbing to temptation, so that, 'Red Riding Hood is at once the innocent girl, the *femme-fatale* and the inevitable fallen woman' (Bonner 7). While the literary appropriation of the tale has focused on Red's journey from one archetype to another, from virgin to whore, with an emphasis on female sexual knowledge as a dangerous force, Zipes proposes that the oral version was in fact a quest narrative that sought to highlight the dangers a hero faces when venturing out into the world:

> Red Riding Hood's desire for the wolf [can be viewed] as a desire for the other, or a general quest for self-identification. She seeks to know herself in a social context, gazes into the wolf's

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> eyes to see a mirror reflection of who she might be . . . She wants to establish contact with her unconscious and discover what she is lacking. By recognizing the wolf outside of her as part of herself, just as the wolf seeks the female in himself, she can become at one with herself (Zipes 361).

Here, Red and the wolf represent the struggle to temper the civilized and wild nature within us all, but there are other hegemonic binaries within the tale: conscious-unconscious, innocence-experience, masculine-feminine. Zipes' analysis promotes a Jungian reading, as the fluidity between archetypal forms is in accordance with Jung's theory, that, for successful psychic integration, we must be able to acknowledge the multiplicity within ourselves and society to overcome the imbalance of hierarchical dichotomous models. As the individual seeks out this journey, to successfully integrate the unconscious, they must first confront the psyche's shadow:

> The shadow is a moral problem that challenges the whole ego-personality, for no-one can become conscious without considerable moral effort. To become conscious of it involves recognizing the dark aspects of the personality as present and real. This act is the essential condition for any kind of self-knowledge (Jung 8).

In *The Grandmother's Tale*,[9] this is represented by the cannibalistic offerings of Red's grandmother's flesh and blood. This has been interpreted to represent the continuation of life by Catherine Orenstein and Yvonne Verdier: that as Red's grandmother dies, she herself matures and takes her place. But the fact that the wolf makes this grizzly gift suggests otherwise; as representative of the psyche's shadow, he offers a complete and perhaps irreversible crossing over to the 'dark side', to fully release the shadow. Romancing the shadow is difficult, it has to be a fine balance of testing the boundaries; the hero must be aware of the risks involved, that to go too far could result in the literal consumption of consciousness, and the heroine's initial tasting and then rejection of the cannibal meal represents this successful struggle. In enlisting the tale for patriarchal acculturation, Perrault and the Grimms replace the psychic quest with a lesson in female transgression. Like Eve, Red's attempt to move beyond ignorance towards knowledge is reduced to sexual temptation and corruption, resulting in punishment, sometimes death, and a very clear definition of gender roles.

Zipes' assertion that 'Red and the wolf are one' is also used by Carol Clover to illustrate her theory on gender in the horror film when discussing audience identification and acknowledgement of the Other: 'The Other is also another part of ourselves, the projection of our repressed infantile rage and desire . . . that we have had in the name of civilisation to repudiate. We are both Red Riding Hood *and* the wolf; the force of the experience, the horror, comes from "knowing" both sides of the story' (Clover 131). In many ways the journey into psychic knowledge of the Other and experiencing both sides of the story is central to understanding *Hard Candy* as an unconscious appropriation. Although Hayley appears to be in danger of being sexually and mortally consumed by Jeff, the character dynamic repeatedly challenges this assumption. As Hayley openly assumes the role of predator, sedating Jeff and tying him to a chair, she taunts him by dressing up in his 'wolf's' clothing and confronts him directly: 'What the fuck are you doing? . . . You're the grown-up. If a kid's experimenting and says something

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flirty, you ignore it, you don't encourage it. If a kid says let's make screwdrivers you take the alcohol away, you don't race them to the next drink' (*Hard Candy*).

Figure 1 reminds us of the disguises adopted by the wolf in the tales as seducer and grandmother, but Hayley's dressing up game also pokes fun at the masculinization of the heroine tradition, discussed by Jacinda Read, in relation to the rape-revenge film and the blurring boundaries of gender identity:

> the rape-revenge film . . . dramatizes and articulates some of the gaps and contradictions . . . between the feminine (victim) and the feminist (avenger) . . . the binary logic written into the very term 'rape-revenge' is itself suggestive of such contradictions and oppositions, the hyphen between the two words directs us towards the way in which these films can be read as an attempt to bridge . . . that gap (Read 4).

Although *Hard Candy* is not strictly a rape-revenge film in the traditional sense, where the victim becomes the avenger, the fluidity of archetypal construction offers a more complex idea of the tensions between innocence and culpability, as the typical assumptions that men are experienced or corrupt and women are naive and innocent is breached. The audience's limited knowledge and uncertainty regarding Jeff and Hayley, as protagonist and antagonist, is intensified as their relationship shifts and flip-flops so that the multiplicity of the genre framework reflects the characters' blurring identities. While reinforcing that Red and the wolf are one, Figure 1 simultaneously alerts us to the elusive nature of Hayley's character, and compels the audience to perceive her differently: is Hayley, like Jeff, also a wolf in disguise? Hayley's duality as potential-victim-turned-perpetrator is also reinforced visually in relation to the 'final girl' of horror, where Clover articulates the changing depiction of the heroine for male spectatorship; that she is primarily eroticized as a pleasure object and then in turn masculinized to provide a point of identification. There is no question that Hayley also undergoes this process, as at the beginning of the film her short skirt and the close-ups on her delicate facial features draws attention to her 'vulnerable femininity', while later, after she has Jeff under restraint, she appears more androgynous, with an emphasis on her muscle definition, as Figures 2 and 3 illustrate.

Figure 1 *Hard Candy*.

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Figure 2 *Hard Candy*.

Figure 3 *Hard Candy*.

Hayley's acquisition of Jeff's gun (the phallus) also aligns her as the *femme-castratrice*, an archetype discussed by Barbara Creed in relation to the monstrous feminine within the rape-revenge cycle of films, where she also examines the psychic dangers involved in vigilantism. The fake castration scene in *Hard Candy* is the high-tension point of the film, akin to the devouring of Red Riding Hood. This reading is emphasized in Figure 4, which occurs during the castration scene when Hayley tells Jeff she is going to investigate a noise outside.

Here, Jeff's neighbour is seen deflowering a rose bush while Hayley is only just discernible in the background, on the roof, which unknown to the audience at this point will be Jeff's place of execution. This scene reiterates the control Hayley has on the situation she has contrived; she already knows how this story will end. The rose is traditionally understood as a symbol of femininity and youth, is often used as a metaphor for female genitalia, and appears in many *Little Red Riding Hood* adaptations and rape narratives.[10] Here, Slade effectively appropriates the symbolism and subverts it by conceptually replacing the forced defloration of Red Riding Hood with the castration of

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Figure 4 *Hard Candy*.

the wolf. The gender fluidity and the fact that Hayley's sexual knowledge is positioned outside the realms of individuation and maturation so that she can take on the role of avenger disrupts the tale's traditional dynamics, eradicating the possibility of a 'conven tional' romantic/sexual development that rejects literary androcentrism and reclaims the shadow quest of the oral tales. Her knowledge of sexual violence—and specifically paedophilia—makes explicit that she is also fully aware of her own sexual agency, using it to trap Jeff in typical *femme-fatale* style. Her alignment as this archetype also has a double meaning: on the one hand, it suggests that maybe she is not the 14-year-old she claims to be, while on the other, it compels the audience to grimly ponder how a teen-age girl would know how to manipulate adult sexuality.

As it becomes clear that Hayley can be seen in monstrous terms, as the wolf, our sympathies are reversed as Jeff pleads to be released. He ironically points out to Hayley the psychic dangers for the individual in releasing the shadow, of acting out, 'dark desires':

> Jeff: You're getting yourself in terrible trouble.
> Hayley: Oh, how's that?
> Jeff: If you cut me in any way you won't forget it. It changes you when you hurt somebody . . . the things you do wrong, they haunt you. You wanna remember this day with a guy on a date, on your wedding night? (*Hard Candy*)

But Hayley simply sees this as another of Jeff's desperate attempts to convince her to let him go, and she effectively turns his own argument against him by asking if he would have heeded such advice before abusing one of his victims, saying, 'Stop. Don't do that to yourself. Stop. Don't do that to yourself. Stop. Don't do that to yourself. Stop. Stop' (*Hard Candy*). As an audience we cannot help but agree with Hayley; Jeff does not deserve our sympathy, but we are forced to ask ourselves if he deserves her perverted sense of vigilante justice. The relationship between predator and prey, perpetrator and victim, right from wrong, and the blurring of such boundaries is at the heart of *Hard Candy*, and requires an audience's active participation to understand this liminal dilemma. Although the portrayal of Hayley is empowering because she 'is not objectified but has free will throughout, lives in the moment and improvises' (Ebert 1), the final image of Hayley (Figure 5) compels the audience to recall Jeff's warning:

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Figure 5 *Hard Candy*.

With her hood up, eyes down, looking pensive, and sitting in the liminal space of the woods, Hayley's and Jeff's blurring identity seems even more apparent as 'her metaphoric journey appears to have turned her not into a woman but into a wolf . . . so much so that their [Hayley's and Jeff's] characters and morality become nearly indistinguishable' (Greenhill and Kohm 58). The experience has forever changed her, as Jeff predicted. And with the knowledge that she has assisted in the deaths of two men, the 'innocence' of her youth is lost, and to some extent never existed. The revelation at the end of the film that Hayley knew Jeff was guilty all along, and that she has already 'executed' his accomplice, provides the final twist. Her deliberate and complicit involvement in entrapment and execution suggests that although not consumed by the wolf, she has been consumed by her psyche's shadow. As Greenhill and Kohm assert, this aligns her character with the fate of Perrault's heroine, and perhaps unconsciously/unintentionally ensures the production becomes a part of the tradition of *Little Red Riding Hood* stories that act as cautionary tales, but for the wolf as well as Red.

While Hayley's experience cannot join the collection of *Little Red Riding Hood* appropriations that seek to restore the positivity of female development, the quest narrative can still be recognized, especially in terms of the individual shadow, and offers a wealth of comparisons with the construction of Red as a *femme-fatale* archetype. However, the tales' and film's contexts of rape and paedophilia means the texts are also engaging with complex societal issues, where legal distinctions are often just as blurred and contradictory as cultural perceptions.[11] In this way, the texts can be seen to engage with the Jungian concept of the collective shadow, which

> refers to a huge multidimensional, often horrifying, yet elusive aspect of human life. Difficult to grasp, contain, and evoke in language, the collective shadow refers to an immensity of harm inflicted by human beings upon each other and to the vast aftereffects of such harm in subsequent generations and the entire social body (Kremer and Rothberg 3).

Jurgen Kremer and Donald Rothberg cite genocide, war, slavery, racism, and rape, among others, as manifestations of the collective shadow, and perhaps paedophilia can also be added to this list. In the same way that the individual is in a constant battle to understand his or her own potential for destruction, so is civilization constantly

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struggling to reconcile suffering caused by human atrocity. In this way, cultural productions often reflect our fears and anxieties regarding social issues and appeal to audiences because of their engagement with the collective shadow, which allows for the expression of such fears, releasing them from taboo and repression: 'Bound up with disapprobation and distaste for crime is an intense interest in its forms, its motivations and impacts. This doubled relation, oscillating between censure and desire, can be called *fascination*' (Young 3). The expression of the collective shadow can be directly related to the context from which the oral story developed in terms of the Inquisition and fears of religious deviance that resulted in witch and werewolf trials during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[12] As a cautionary tale, its imperative is to promote social conformity and control, whether that is in relation to medieval Christianity or female sexual behaviour, through fear. *Hard Candy* combines audience fear and 'fascination' with the cautionary tale to explore the concept of the collective shadow by challenging our expectations of the story in its depiction of sex, violence, and paedophilia, but specifically, in our inability to distinguish clearly between them.

Greenhill and Kohm discuss the progression of the paedophile in film and note, that, up until the late 1980s, productions typically focused on searching for psychological answers as a means of understanding the cause and nature of paedophilia. But, since then, they suggest the paedophile is typically depicted as a manifestation of evil that the judicial system struggles to control: 'Vigilante-themed crime films lost all interest in the psychological roots of sexual deviation and suggested, collectively, that the state was in no position to protect the public from the sexual menace posed by pimps, paedophiles, and child pornographers' (Greenhill and Kohm 44). The shadow is equated with evil forces that seek to destroy human development. So, by suggesting that paedophilic crimes are situated outside of the realms of legal justice, the paedophile becomes a part of that force, a de-humanized object (like the werewolf), onto which society can project and exorcise collective anxiety, often by reacting in a violent way. Jon Silverman and David Wilson discuss the moral panic incited by media coverage of extreme cases of paedophilic homicide at the turn of the twenty-first century and the way the media exploits the human fascination with its shadow side that indirectly encourages a vigilante action, 'which propels some people to take to the streets to harass suspected paedophiles, and to daub slogans on walls and doors threatening to castrate and kill' (Silverman and Wilson 4). *Hard Candy* exhibits this situation in its depiction of Jeff as a paedophile with Hayley as the vigilante who infiltrates chat rooms—a technique used by both the police and paedophiles—to ensnare her quarry, uses drugs to sedate her victim (a reference to Rohypnol perhaps), and the threat of castration. While the horror of such crimes is not being relegated here, media coverage of these events, as well as rape cases, can be seen to exaggerate the threat of 'stranger danger'. Most victims of rape and/or paedophilia know their attackers and suffer abuse in their own homes in a way that is rarely reported on to incite social responsibility.[13] This makes paedophilia appear as a shadow loitering on the edge of civilization, when in reality it is typically close at hand, terrifyingly recalling Perrault's moral and the depiction of the wolf as a 'friend': 'Little girls this seems to say never stop upon your way / Never trust a stranger, friend; no-one knows how it will end / As you're pretty so be wise, wolves may lurk in every guise / Now as then this simple truth; sweetest tongue hast sharpest tooth'

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(Perrault 21). Perrault's verse makes it all too clear that the wolf/rapist could just as easily be the 'man next door' as 'here the wolf no longer stands for the savage wilderness, but for the deceptions of the city and the men who wielded authority in it. He openly turns the usual identity of the wolf on its head and locates him near at hand, rather than far away and Other' (Warner 183). This approach is adopted by Slade at the beginning of the film, as apart from Jeff's suspicious interest in a 14-year-old girl, he appears to be the apotheosis of modern Western 'decency': an attractive, successful freelance photographer with his own home, car, and good neighbours. Slade attempts to challenge the cultural perceptions regarding paedophilia and paedophiles by allowing us to sympathize with Jeff, effectively exposing vigilantism as another manifestation of the collective shadow.

Culturally entwined with the notion of the paedophile, and especially the hebephile, is the moral panic regarding the sexualization of young girls in the media. Nelson explains *Hard Candy's* engagement with this issue: 'We do have this culture that likes to sexualise teenage girls and even younger girls and then somehow makes it the fault of those girls rather than the fault of the people who are manufacturing these clothes'.[14] Since Perrault cloaked his heroine in red, Red Riding Hood has always been accused of displaying her sexuality, but the objectifying effect of sexualizing young girls has wider implications for how we perceive female sexuality when the distinction between girl and woman becomes blurred: 'the "girling" of femininity is evident in both the celebration of the young woman as a marker of postfeminist liberation and the continuing tendency to either explicitly term or simply treat women of a variety of ages as girls' (Tasker and Negra 18). By eradicating the notion of a developmental process, we can no longer collectively determine what levels of sexual knowledge and behaviour is acceptable for certain age groups. The ambiguous moral position surrounding teenage sexuality is represented in the film's tagline 'Strangers shouldn't talk to little girls' and the film's promotional poster that shows Hayley standing on the release pin of an animal trap: but is Hayley caught in mantrap or is she the bait?[15] The double meaning of the poster adds to the confusion that Jeff tries to argue has led him to a liaison with an adolescent. Recalling rape myths discussed by Susan Brownmiller in the 1970s, such as 'all women want to be raped, she was asking for it [and] if you're going to be raped you might as well relax and enjoy it' (Brownmiller 311), as well as the assertion that Red encourages a sexual assignation, Jeff tries to deflect the blame from himself and project it onto Hayley:

> Jeff: You were coming on to me.
> Hayley: Oh come on—that's what they all say Jeff.
> Jeff: Who?
> Hayley: Who? The paedophiles! She was so sexy; she was asking for it; she was only 'technically' a girl she acted like a woman. It's just so easy to blame a kid, isn't it? Just because a girl knows how to imitate a woman does not mean she's ready to do the things a woman does. (*Hard Candy*)

The dialogue here also draws attention to debates surrounding the media and consumer market that can be seen to sexualize young girls by encouraging them to imitate women: 'In order to market the accoutrements of adult sexuality (that is, bras, g-strings and make-up), girls' bodies are being repackaged as sexually available and

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photographed in the same way as adult models' (Rush and La Nauze 7).[16] As a professional photographer, Jeff decorates his apartment with his own work featuring adolescent girls, a fact that Hayley is quick to point out, alerting us to the difficulty in determining a boundary between adolescent and adult sexuality, as well as paedophilic pornography and art. As an unconscious appropriation, the articulation of this blurring distinction in *Hard Candy* is also resonant with other *Little Red Riding Hood* adaptations, as the wolf is typically portrayed by someone much older than Red. However, until the making of *Hard Candy*, the paedophilic element of the tale has remained either unacknowledged or peripheral.[17]

While it is obvious that, as a society, we wish to protect children from exploitation and abuse, criticism of Rush and La Nauze's work by Abigail Bray, Danielle Egan, and Gail Hawkes[18] has rightly focused on their failure to make distinctions between developmental child sexuality and adult sexuality, as well as only considering girls as 'victims' of sexual corruption, not boys. The focus on girls as the subjects being corrupted perpetuates the binary of sexual innocence and corruption, as well as negating the importance of any sense of sexual agency developing girls may feel, while supporting the moral panic surrounding paedophilia. This suggests, that, while on the surface it may seem that the consumer industry and paedophiles are collective shadows, another—and just as real—threat comes from the insistence that as a society we still uphold the patriarchal messages behind the literary appropriation of *Little Red Riding Hood*; that 'sexuality can only ever be imposed upon girl children' (Laurie 1) and women, thus denying and denigrating the development of female sexual agency.

Slade draws on the notion of the sexually provocative teenager in the early scenes between Hayley and Jeff, as she flashes Jeff with her top off, and dances in a sexually suggestive way. These images are deliberately confusing and disturbing because they encourage us to forget that Hayley is a minor in what is a sexually adult and potentially abusive situation. The inclusion of female sexual display/expression recalls Perrault's tale and the horror genre, and therefore encourages the audience to expect the sexual awakening and/or rape of Hayley as part of the narrative. Hutcheon discusses this expectation in terms of the need for retelling:

> Like ritual, this kind of repetition brings comfort, a fuller understanding, and the confidence that comes with the sense of knowing what is about to happen next . . . the real comfort lies in the simple act of almost but not quite repeating, in the revisiting of a theme with variations (Hutcheon 115).

In *Hard Candy*, however, this comfort is replaced with audience unease, as Slade's inversion challenges the perception of heterosexual relationships and romance, especially in terms of sexual expression, as the reversal of the traditional dynamic sees Jeff placed in a passive sexual position. Slade's technique further recalls Clover's work, where, in relation to the horror film, she considers the implications of the lingering gaze of the camera on the tortured and eroticized female body, compared with the swift dispatching of male characters, saying, 'that violence and sex are not concomitants but alternatives, the one as much a substitute and prelude to the other' (Clover 136). Figures 6 and 7 are examples of this reversal, and emphasize how the confusion between sex and violence is intrinsic to *Little Red Riding Hood* narratives.

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Figure 6 *Hard Candy*.

Figure 7 *Hard Candy*.

As Jeff is prepared for castration, he becomes the focus of the lingering gaze, and we see several close-ups and this mid-shot of him with his arms appearing flung back (although actually tied) making him exposed and vulnerable; with parted lips and closed eyes he could easily be in the throes of ecstasy and not terror. Viewed as an image out of context it is difficult to determine, and throughout there are also images where Hayley's intimidating interrogation tactics look more like the moment before a passionate screen kiss.

These sexually exciting images are made more sensuous and visceral by a continued display of sweat, tears, and saliva: bodily fluids associated with fear and/or sexual arousal. The ambivalent response is perfectly understandable as we are torn between knowledge of eroticism, paedophilia, and vigilantism in a way that reflects the various incarnations of *Little Riding Hood* as erotic tale, parable of rape, or rape-revenge story. Male viewers at the premiere in Cannes were so offended and distressed by Slade's reversal that many walked out or began chanting, 'Kill the bitch'[19] during the build-up to the castration scene. Slade attempted to make sense of this response with, 'The film seems to have that reaction on young men. It's as if it's OK for them to watch Slasher

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films in which women get abused, but not men. The testosterone just kicks in' (Kermode 1). It appears that the issue of male torture has also affected reviewers.[20] Mick LaSalle suggests that the film 'missed an opportunity' and could have been more 'interesting' if Slade had chosen to explore Hayley's sexual awakening in a dangerous context. Although this is our expectation of the film from the beginning, I would argue that it is more 'interesting' because Slade chooses to subvert and challenge that expectation. LaSalle also expresses his disappointment in terms of a traditional resolution: 'If Jeff is a monster, we neither see it nor know it and therefore can't enjoy his distress. Indeed, in the normal terms of a thriller, Hayley is the monster, and yet we must watch her with no hope or expectation of her destruction' (LaSalle 1). However, LaSalle seems to have overlooked the fact that Hayley finds Jeff's stash of child pornography and that he confesses to his complicity in the murder of Donna at the end of the film. He grimly thanks Hayley for releasing the demons within, and as he chases her down he says, 'Which do you wanna fuck first—me or the knife?' (*Hard Candy*). This one line allows us to see fully into Jeff's shadow; wielding the knife he used to attack the groin area of the girl in his art work, he threatens Hayley's life while aligning the knife and his penis as weapons to be used against her. It is more accurate to say that while Jeff is a 'bona fide' monster, the real difficulty lies in our identification with Hayley: by justifying her vigilante actions we are saying that one form of monstrosity is more acceptable than another. In this context, it is also telling that critics have not considered the culpability of Jeff in his own destruction—why he chooses death over exposure—but are very swift in pointing out Hayley's dangerous sexual knowledge and the injustice of her escape.

The appropriation of *Little Red Riding Hood* for a paedophilic context enables a further discussion of the themes that have been associated with the tale for at least four hundred years, such as the cultural perception of rape and the gendered construction of innocence. Just as importantly however, it illustrates how the tales are continually adapted to provide a deconstruction, or at least a representation of, society's driving forces, such as the definition of justice, the expression of female sexuality, heterosexual relationships, and why many of us are still willing, as an audience, to accept unquestioningly the blurring of romance and violence when the suffering victim is female but not when they are male.

Hard Candy is a complex amalgamation of many genres and intertexts, but as this article has shown, its unconscious engagement with *Little Red Riding Hood* is indisputable, and goes beyond the trope of the red hood, especially in its exploration of the predator-and-prey dynamic, and the sociopolitical context that articulates the similarities between the tales in the way they reflect cultural perceptions of female sexuality and rape. A feminist-Jungian analysis has been useful in exposing the quest narrative inherent to the tales and Slade's film, as well as exposing how individual dilemmas and situations are related to the wider social body. As an unconscious appropriation, *Hard Candy's* relationship with the subtleties of the original tales and the trajectory of other adaptations—especially in relation to the symbolic use of the rose and the foregrounding of paedophilia—suggests that there is a complex resonance at work in the appropriation and adaptation of fairy tales; that they are involved in a folkloric continuum of development and exchange that allows for contemporaneous issues to be explored within familiar narrative frames and tropes. The re-contextualizing of similar themes,

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as Bacchilega explains, reveals our desire to retell, suggesting we instinctively return to stories when we know there is more to be understood:

> Postmodern revision is often two-fold, seeking to expose, make visible, the fairy tale's complicity with 'exhausted' narrative and gender ideologies, and, by working from the fairy tales' multiple versions, seeking to expose, bring out, what the institutionalisation of such tales for children has forgotten or left unexploited (Bacchilega 50).

Bacchilega's discussion of the continued retelling of fairy tales is remarkably similar to Hutcheon's approach to adaptations, and the vast array of appropriation techniques that allows for different aspects of a source to be diminished and/or embellished. And *Hard Candy* can be seen as an example of how a fairy tale is unconsciously, but specifically, utilized to express contemporaneous issues. This article has articulated the similarities between *Hard Candy* and the themes of *Little Red Riding Hood* as a means of exposing how much more research is required for understanding the pervasiveness of unconscious adaptation but also to promote the consideration of fairy tales as the ultimate intertexts, informing many cultural productions unwittingly.

NOTES

[1] The sightings of Red Riding Hood across our cultural landscape are seemingly infinite in the past ten years alone, with examples ranging from a Japanese commercial advertising breast implants (2006), French horror film *Le Promenons dans le Bois* (*Let's Go for a Walk in the Woods*, 2006), Miami rapper Jacki-o's latest album, *Li'l Red Riding Hood* (2009), to appearing in the music video "Look into My Eyes", a political awareness song about Palestine, by Danish band, Outlandish (2009), and featuring in *ghd's* UK advertising campaign for hair products (2010).

[2] The cultural collective un/conscious is a concept developed by neo-Jungians that refers to a sphere of the unconscious that can be seen as a repository of cultural experience and knowledge that has the ability to become conscious. The concept recognizes that the individual and collective psyche is affected by its contemporaneous social and cultural context, thus allowing for ideological factors to be considered in psychoanalytical theory and practice. For further information on the cultural collective un/conscious, see John Izod's *Myth, Mind and the Screen*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001.

[3] Adaptation theorists such as Deborah Cartmell, Thomas Leitch, Kamilla Elliott, and Imelda Whelehan all discuss the range of taxonomies that have been developed to classify adaptation methods. For more information on this debate, see Kamilla Elliott's *Rethinking the Novel/Film Debate*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003, and Thomas Leitch's *Adaptation and Its Discontents*. Baltimore: John Hopkins UP, 2007. Both of these authors also offer their own taxonomies.

[4] *The Grandmother's Tale* is a composition based on the shared components (that were rejected by Perrault for his tale) from a number of collected oral tales from France by Paul Delarue in 1885. All quotations of the three versions (Delarue, Perrault, and Grimm) are cited from Catherine Orenstein's collection of *Little Red Riding Hood* variants, which includes corresponding critical analyses in *Little Red Riding Hood Uncloaked*. New York: Basic Books, 2002. For further information on *Little Red Riding Hood* variants, see the above and Jack Zipes' *The Trials and Tribulations of Little Red Riding Hood*. London: Routledge, 1993.

[5] Carter's werewolf trilogy includes "The Company of Wolves", "The Werewolf", and "Wolf-Alice", published in her collection of short stories, *The Bloody Chamber* (1979).

[6] Bettelheim's book adopts a Freudian approach to fairy tales and does include a section on *Little Red Riding Hood*, which focuses on Perrault's version of the tale, and the sexual connotations of the red hood symbolising menstruation and the onset of sexual maturation. However, it is generally accepted among folklorists that the oral story, which became known as *Little Red Riding Hood*, originated in medieval southern France and northern Italy during a spate of werewolf and witch trials. The tale is considered a coming-of-age story for sexually developing girls, but the red cape has no direct association with this as until Perrault's publication, the red hood did not exist and so could not have had any bearing on the oral tradition

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pre-dating 1697. For further information on the contextual origins of *Little Red Riding Hood*, see Catherine Velay-Vallantin's "*Little Red Riding Hood* as Fairy Tale, *Fait-divers*, and Children's Literature: The Invention of a Traditional Heritage" in *Out of the Woods: The Origins of the Literary Fairy Tale in Italy and France*. Ed. Nancy Canepa. Detroit: Wayne State UP, 1997.

[7] There are many appropriations of the tale that contest the idea that the heroine can only be a passive victim, such as Carter's "The Werewolf" and "The Company of Wolves" (1979), and Michael Bright's *Freeway* (1996). However, there are also productions that depict Red literally as a wolf, such as Tanith Lee's "Wolfland" (1983), Neil Jordan's *The Company of Wolves* (1984), and Michael Dougherty's *Trick R' Treat* (2008).

[8] The DVD release of *Hard Candy* includes special features that examines the production of the film from concept to marketing and release, under the heading, 'Creating *Hard Candy*: Making of Documentary', and includes interviews with the cast (Ellen Page, Patrick Wilson, and Sandra Oh), producer David Higgins, writer Brian Nelson, and director David Slade.

[9] Although there are supposedly several oral versions, the following synopsis is the most well known containing a triumphant heroine, and is taken from Jack Zipes' *The Trials and Tribulations of Little Red Riding Hood*. London: Routledge, 1993, and is included here for reference only. *The Grandmother's Tale* includes the heroine being sent to visit her grandmother on the other side of the forest by her mother, and the wager with the wolf to see who arrives first. Grandmother is eaten and the wolf lays in wait. However, before assuming his disguise as grandmother, he bottles some of her blood and puts some of her flesh in the cupboard. When Red arrives, he instructs her to eat and drink the offerings he has prepared, but a warning from a cat stops Red from eating after the first bite, as she realizes it is her grandmother's flesh and blood. The wolf demands that Red undress and climb into bed, telling her to throw each item of clothing into the fire. Lying naked in bed with the wolf, Red says she must answer the 'call of nature' and go outside. The wolf reluctantly agrees after tying some wool around her ankle. When outside Red loops the wool around a tree branch and runs home. The wolf, realising he has been tricked, chases Red through the forest, only to catch up with her as she closes the door of her home.

[10] Images of the rose in other *Little Red Riding Hood* adaptations and rape narratives include Neil Jordan's *The Company of Wolves* (1984), David Peace's *Red Riding* Quartet (1999–2002), Peter Jackson's *The Lovely Bones* (2010), Goldfrapp's music video for "Strict Machine" (2003), and *Vogue* fashion shoot "Into the Woods" (Sept. issue, 2009).

[11] For more information on the cultural perception, as well as legal distinctions on paedophilic crimes, see Donald West's article "Paedophilia: Plague or Panic" in *The Journal of Forensic Psychiatry*. Vol. 11, No. 3, Dec. 2000, and Ben Spiecker's and Jan Steutel's article "Paedophilia, Sexual Desire and Perversity" in *Journal of Moral Education*. Vol. 26, Issue 3, Sept. 1997.

[12] See note 6.

[13] For more information on child abuse in the family home, see the articles referenced in note 10 and Jon Silverman and David Wilson's *Innocence Betrayed: Paedophilia, the Media and Society*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2002.

[14] See note 8.

[15] Promotional Poster and Tagline can be viewed on *Internet Movie Database*. Accessed at: http://www.imdb.com/media/rm419271168/tt0424136.

[16] Rush and La Nauze's paper is an assessment of the sexualization of children in the media in Australia, but concerns have also been raised in the United Kingdom, with reference to pole-dancing kits merchandized in Tesco's toy department, and Primark's line of padded bikini bras for pre-pubescent girls. Newspaper articles relating to these incidents can be found online at *The Daily Mail* Web site: http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-412195/Tesco-condemned-selling-pole-dancing-toy.html, *The Guardian* Web site: http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2010/apr/15/primark-padded-bikinis-mumsnet-sexuality, and *The Telegraph* Web site: http://www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/personal-view/7601381/Primark-padded-bikini-row-Leave-our-kids-alone.html.

[17] Paedophilia does seem to be a part of *Little Red Riding Hood*'s trajectory whether it is intentional or not. One of the most striking examples, where the age gap is not explicitly related to paedophilia, can be seen in Neil Jordan's *The Company of Wolves*, where Red is played by the 12-year-old Sarah Patterson, and the wolf by 40-year-old Micha Bergese. Michael Bright's heroine in *Freeway* (1996) is a victim of paedophilia in the family home, but the representation of Vanessa as a late teenager provides scope for a commentary and deconstruction of various kinds of sexual abuse, not just paedophilia.

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[18] Counter arguments to Rush and La Nauze's paper can be found in several articles including Abigail Bray's "The Question of Intolerance: Corporate Paedophilia and Child Sexual Abuse Moral Panics" and Danielle Egan and Gail Hawkes' "Girls, Sexuality and the Strange Carnalities of Advertisements: Deconstructing the Discourse of Corporate Paedophilia." Both found in *Australian Feminist Studies*. Vol. 23, No. 57, Sept. 2008.

[19] 'Kill the Bitch' was also heard throughout auditoriums in relation to another 'monstrous heroine', that of Alex, played by Glenn Close in *Fatal Attraction* (1987). Haley and Alex can be linked by their gender coding, as being more masculine than feminine, and the fact that they use their agency to inflict violence upon men further threatens expectation. For further analysis of audience response to *Fatal Attraction*, see Chris Holmlund's article "Reading Character with a Vengeance: The *Fatal Attraction* Phenomenon" in *The Velvet Light Trap*. Vol. 27, Spring 1991.

[20] Reviewers Jonathan Rosenbaum for *Chicago Reader* and Desson Thomson for *The Washington Post* were also disappointed with Slade's plot and character development. Their reviews can both be found at Metacritic: http://apps.metacritic.com/video/titles/hardcandy.

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